

Barbless Circle Hook News

Issue 2, October 2008

Catching up

Banner Year

Things are looking up in the world of barbless circle hooks. The year 2008 was a banner year for the Barbless Circle Hook Project. The number of tournaments that featured Barbless Circle Hook Challenges increased, and the number of anglers that signed up to fish broke all records. The catches were the best ever in the history of the project.

In 2008 there were 5 tournaments that featured a Barbless Circle Hook Challenge. The Pole Benda, Tokunaga Ulua Challenge, Hilo Casting Club, Lihue Fishing Supply, and the Obake Shootout tournament all hosted the challenge. These tournaments provided anglers from the Big Island to Kauai an opportunity to convince themselves that these hooks do work.

A milestone occurred when Mitchell Taketa's 66.9 pound ulua placed 10th in the S. Tokunaga Ulua Challenge. In the history of the project, this was the first time that a barbless-caught fish placed in any major shoreline tournament. With shoreline fishing tournaments weighing in seven monster ulua in excess of 100 pounds this year, could 2009 be the year that a 100 pounder is caught on a barbless circle hook during a tournament? Can a barbless ulua win a tournament? Only time will tell.



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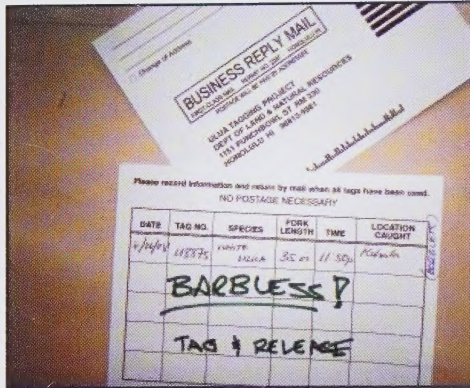
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PIFSC LIBRARY

Science, Service, Stewardship

Ulua and 'O'io Tagging Projects

Ulua Tagging Project



Ulua and Papio tournaments statewide have made great strides in supporting conservation of our resources. Fishing tournaments that have added an Ulua/Papio Tag & Release category have been steadily growing in popularity. With this increase in tournament activity and more and more fishermen using barbless hooks, the Barbless Circle Hook project is teaming up with the Ulua Tagging project in 2009 to reward tournament anglers who use barbless circle hooks while tagging and releasing fish.

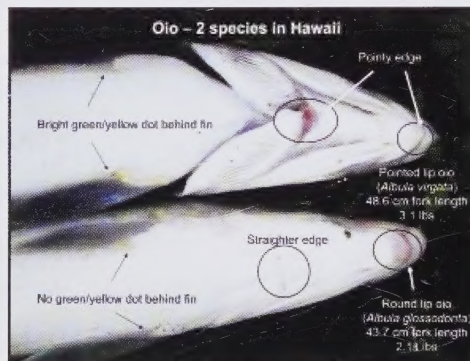
The inclusion of the Ulua Tagging project itself in fishing tournaments started about 4 years ago with the first S. Tokunaga Ulua Challenge tournament in Hilo. Mike Tokunaga was the first to approach our project to support a tag and release category in his tournament. The idea was to promote and educate anglers about the Ulua Tagging Project. Since then interest and support has grown tremendously among tournaments.

Others that have also joined to encourage and reward participation include Izuo Brothers, Naoki, many other tackle dealers, and the Pacific Islands Fisheries Group (PIFG, a non-profit organization-<http://www.fishtoday.org/index.html>). These entities have teamed up and contributed by donating prizes and awards to support Tag and Release categories in tournaments. PIFG has been instrumental in sponsoring tagging categories in

various tournaments to promote responsible fishing.

Last year 4 tournaments drew over 300 participants in the tag and release category. The Mark White Tag and Release tournament was the first statewide shoreline tournament dedicated to 100% tag and release of jacks! A number of other well known tournaments such as the Hilo Casting Club, Pole Benders, Ohana Shoreline, Lihue Fishing Supply, Atlapac Weighmasters, and the Family Feud have incorporated tag and release. Statewide more tournaments are including tag and release.

Many ulua and papio are now being tagged during these tournaments. Hopefully one of these days a tagged ulua/papio will grow up to be a tournament winner! – Clay, Ulua Tagging Project.



Oio Tagging Project

In modern Hawai'i, bonefish locally known as 'O'io have limited economic importance as a recreational species and have marginal importance as a commercial fishery. In the early 1980's, two distinct species were determined to inhabit Hawaiian waters (*Albula glossodonta* "round jaw" and *A. virgata* "sharp jaw"). They are very similar in shape and color, but there are distinct differences in the shape of their lower jaws. Bonefish are bottom feeders that prey primarily on shrimp, crabs, fishes and worms. Mature fishes are commonly found feeding inshore, on shallow flats, usually over mud, coral and grass and, occasion-

ally over white sand. Commercial catch reports have shown a steep decline in landings over the past decades. In the late 1960's and early 1970's the average annual commercial catches were reported at 18,000 pounds, compared to the 2005 annual landings of 3,344 pounds. However, currently the recreational catch is not reported and not fully known.

Only the basic lifecycle of bonefish has been described, and little is known about movements or behavior in Hawai'i. To gain a better understanding of this fish the 'O'io tagging project was initiated in 2003. Between May 2003 and February 2006 more than 50 recreational fishermen tagged 1,147 'O'io and recaptured 19 of those fish. Most fish were recaptured near the initial tagging site and the average distance between release and recapture sites was less than 5 miles. There was one exception, when a fish tagged off Hawai'i Kai was recaptured off Kaunakakai Harbor on Moloka'i, 609 days after being tagged. This year



the tagging project has restarted with the objective to recruit a larger number of fishers in order to examine fishing success by time (e.g., seasonal, tidal, etc.) and location, to determine habitat use and migratory patterns; to estimate population abundance, growth, and mortality, and to determine the status of bonefish stocks. If you would like to be involved with the tagging project please contact: Kimberlee Harding, kharding@oceanicinstitute.org.



Monk seals and marine turtles in 2008



Monk Seals

Although the total number of monk seals in the main Hawaiian islands is unknown, the 113 individual seals identified in 2008 can serve as a minimum population estimate. In recent years there have been an average of 5-10 fishing gear interactions with seals per year. Some of these have resulted in hands on type rescues to remove the gear. As evidenced in the past rescue attempts this is potentially dangerous both for the animal and the researcher alike. The proactive voluntary use of a self-shedding barbless circle hook by fishermen when sighting a seal in their fishing area could result in a less injurious outcome should an accidental hooking occur. – *John Henderson, Monk Seal Research Program.*

Marine Turtles

Hawaiian sea turtle strandings have been documented by the Marine Turtle Research Program of PIFSC since 1982. In total there are more than 5,000 stranding reports of which approximately 1,000 turtles were involved with fishing gear such as line, net, or hooks. Of those, more than half involved fishing line and approximately 10% involved hooks. About half of these turtles were successfully released alive. Reports are also received from recreational divers about entangled or hooked turtles, but these reports are not included within the stranding reports. By using barbless circle hooks, sea turtles and other incidentally captured animals may be easily released without much harm to the animal. It may also prevent loss of fishing gear for the fishermen if the hook can be quickly dislodged by the animal itself instead of being taken along with any attached line. – *Shawn, Marine Turtle Research Program.*

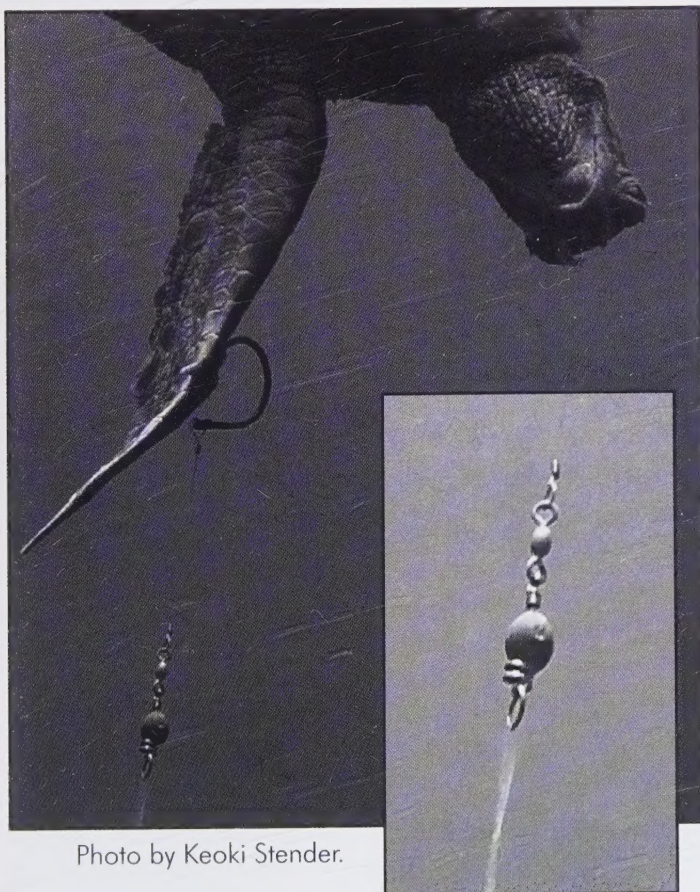


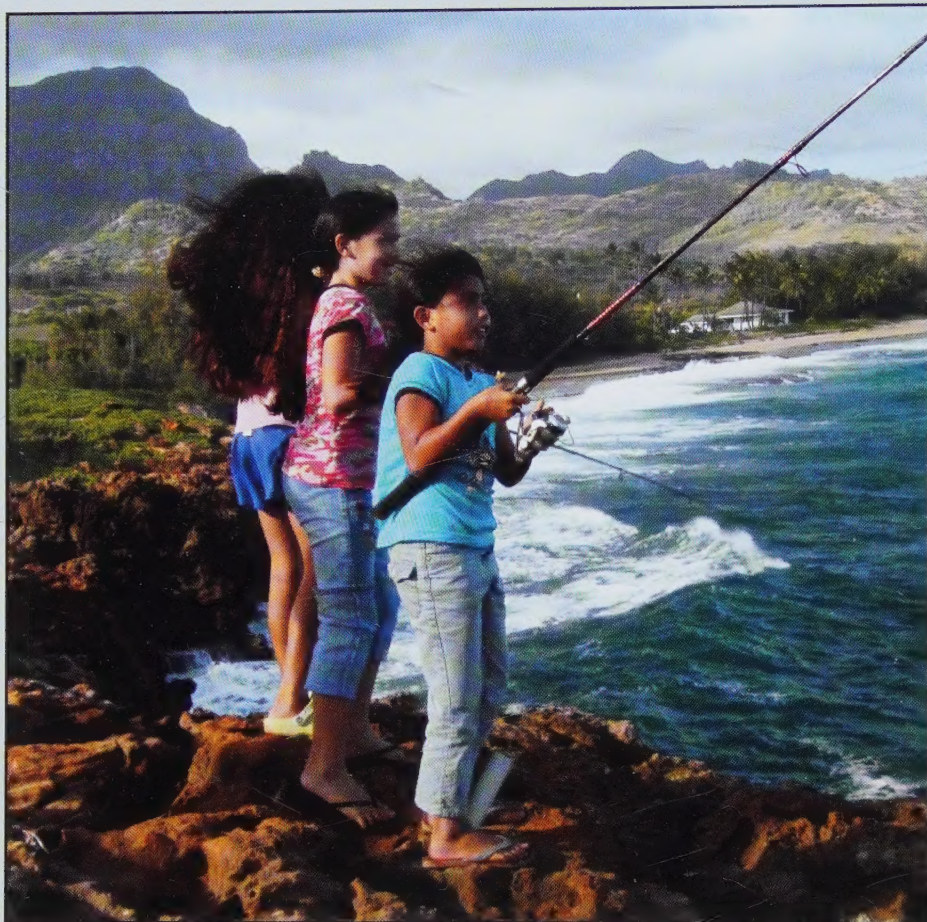
Photo by Keoki Stender.



How to make a barbless circle hook.



New Activities



Keiki Barbless

This year, the Barbless Circle Hook project expanded its outreach to include more of our young anglers. This was a first time exclusive invitation only opportunity. Fishing clubs from Oahu, Kauai, and the Big Island were invited to sponsor their children in a non-competitive fishing opportunity that would allow them to explore the effectiveness of barbless circle hooks. It was basically a take-your-child fishing opportunity for the fishing club members. School-based fishing club outings also provided fishing opportunities.

Any catches using barbless circle

hooks or just barbless hooks in general had an equal chance of winning through a random drawing from the pool of all catches.. Catches using barbless hooks were reported on the forms provided. Fishing information,



as well as a paragraph about the catch and a picture, was required to complete the catch event report.

This first year did not set any records in catches but the kids had a lot of fun fishing. Congratulations to all who participated this year. Best of luck in 2009.



PIFG Taape Tournament

The Pacific Islands Fisheries Group hosted an Oahu Keiki Taape Challenge this past summer. The goal was to educate the fishermen and bring awareness about the introduced taape and their effects on the native species. This prolific species is found throughout the main Hawaiian Island chain and has multiplied to the point of displacing our native species that we love to eat. Fishermen and divers have commented about the many fishing and diving areas that have been taken over. The Barbless Circle Hook project has partnered with PIFG in their outreach and education efforts to the keiki.

Many ulua and papio are now being tagged during these tournaments. One of these days a tagged ulua/papio will grow up to be a tournament winner! – Clay, Ulua Tagging Project.



Barbless 2008 Circle Hook Tournament Outreach

This year, in addition to the tournaments that hosted the Barbless Circle Hook Challenges, the project had some excellent opportunities to outreach to the fishing community through the K-Mart tournament on Kauai and the first Hot Rods tournament on Oahu. We were very fortunate to have been invited to distribute our informational materials and give away hundreds of **free** hook sample bags.

Chad Yasumura's **Hot Rods** tournament weigh-in was held at Keehi Lagoon park on May 4. This tournament, a first for Chad Yasumura, was well attended and provided another opportunity for community outreach.

Everyone got to check out Chad's new line of casting rods, have some fun, and win some prizes at the same time. It was a win-win for all involved.

The **K-Mart** tournament weigh-in was held on July 20 at the Lihue store.



Participation was excellent with a family atmosphere and many women and children competing. Assistant manager Jarett Chytka and his band of merry volunteers hosted an excellent tournament. It was truly a fun weigh-in and a community event unto itself. Perhaps next year a Barbless Circle Hook Challenge can be incorporated into the format.

Barbless Circle Hook Tournament Challenges

Pole Benda, May 22-25, 2008.

The 10th Annual "Pole Benda" Invitational Fishing Tournament is one of the many prestigious tournaments on the Big Island. This year, the tournament founder Eddie Carvalho Jr. invited the NOAA Barbless Circle Hook project to host a barbless circle hook challenge at the tournament. Thirty-seven of the 115 anglers who entered the tournament signed up to compete in the Barbless Circle Hook Challenge. Many thanks to Eddie for the invitation. It was an honor to have been invited.

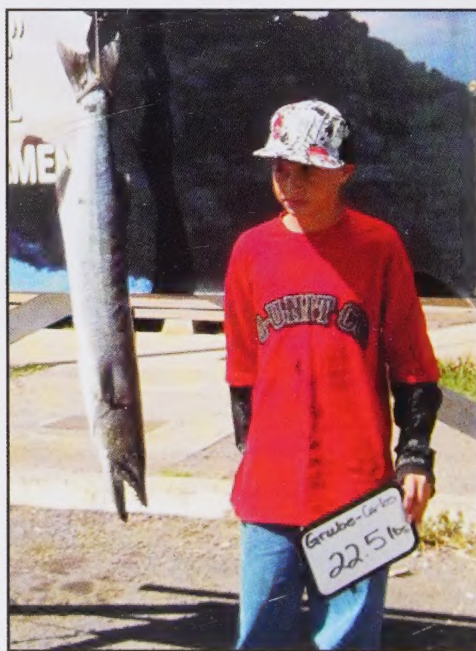
This 4-day tournament is known for the consistently large ulua that are weighed

in. This year was no exception. Overall tournament results were spectacular. The largest ulua, a **110.4** pounder, was caught by Scott Burns. The largest ulua caught on a barbless circle hook was by Robert Teixeira and weighed in at **46.6** lbs. Junior angler Marcus Grube-Carlos (13 yrs) caught a respectable **22.5** lb kaku on a barbless circle hook. Honorable mention from the Barbless Circle Hook project went to Rody Dasalla who caught a 33-inch ulua on a barbless circle hook then tagged and released it to fight another day.



S. Tokunaga Ulua Challenge, June 5-8, 2008

The S. Tokunaga Store Ulua Challenge weigh-in was held on June 8. The largest tournament on the Big Island provided a lot of excitement for all involved. This year the tournament hosted a record 449 participants. The Barbless Circle



Tournament Activity - 2008

Hook Challenge also had a record 135 anglers, which included four junior anglers. One hundred fifty-nine anglers signed up for the State Ulua Tagging Challenge.

The Barbless Circle Hook Challenge had the best ever participation and weigh-in in the history of the project. This year the barbless-caught fish were weighed in at the main stage area with the rest of the fishes and labeled with a "NOAA Barbless" tag for all to see. Sixteen anglers weighed in a total of 18 fish. The largest fish was caught by Oahu angler Mitchell Taketa at **66.9 lb**. Mitchell also placed tenth overall with this fish. Mitchell and his partner Ken Waters fished the entire tournament using barbless circle hooks. Ken landed 4 fishes using the barbless circle hooks. He tagged and released 2 of the 4 fishes. There were many barbless uluas in the 30-50 lb range, as well



as smaller ones. Results such as these provide excitement, encouragement, and confidence for other anglers who have yet to try these hooks.

The overall results of this tournament boggled the mind, as many huge fish were weighed during the 3-hour weigh-in. The overall top 10 ulua winners were Jason Abadilla-**124.6 lb**, John Branco-**103.8 lb**, Bradley Erece Jr-**101.8**



lb, Laron Kageyama-**95.2 lb**, Dominic Uyetake-**74.8 lb**, Torry Carvalho-**71.9 lb**, Clarence Alameida-**71.0**, Merrill De-Mello-**70.7 lb**, Koa Marzo-**68.3 lb**, and **Mitchell Taketa-66.9 lb barbless ulua**. Chad Kosinski caught the largest omilu-**24.8 lb** and beat out fellow angler, Ricardo Garza (also **24.8 lbs**), by landing the longer fish.



Hilo Casting Club 33rd Annual Tournament July 8-12, 2008

The 2008 Hilo Casting Club tournament was dedicated to the late **Kinney K.K. Louie**, an outstanding fisherman and active club member who helped make the Hilo Casting Club into what it is today. Forever a club member, he will be greatly missed by all.

This was the first official year the Barbless Circle Hook project had a barbless challenge at the tournament. There was some confusion in announcing the Barbless Circle Hook Challenge this year, but it all worked out amicably in the end. Next year, there should be no doubt that the Challenge is on.

The results of this big fish tournament were as mind boggling as the Tokunaga's was with three 100+ lb uluas weighed in. Jason Perez



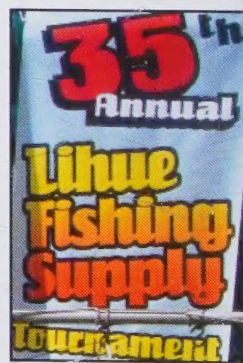
topped everyone with a **111.7 lb** white ulua. The rest of the top 5 were Robert Teixeira-**105.7 lb**, Reuben Llanes, **103.8 lb**, John Branco, **92.5 lb**, and Glen



Roxburg, **77.6 lb**. The largest barbless circle hook ulua was caught by fifth place winner and "Outstanding Angler" award winner Glen Roxburg-**50.1 lb**. Glen's catches of a **77.6, 62.7**, a barbless circle hook **50.1** pound ulua plus a **15.5** pound omilu were very impressive in this year of monster uluas. The deciding factor in the Governor's Koa Bowl was the 50.1 lb ulua that he caught on the barbless circle hook.

Lihue Fishing Supply 35th Annual Tournament, September 12-14, 2008

The 35th Annual Lihue Fishing Supply Tournament weigh-in was held on September 14. The tournament was rumored to be Jean Nakamura's



Tournament Activity - 2008



last which was probably why the number of participants skyrocketed to a record total of 490 men, women, and children. Thanks to Jean, this was the first year that the barbless circle hook challenge was issued to the fishermen of Kauai. Answering the challenge were 82 fishermen of all ages. The tournament emphasis, as always, was on community, family, and having fun. As usual many pictures were taken. Even the winners of the raffle prizes took their last photo with Jean as a memento of a proud Kauai summertime tradition that will be sorely missed.

Although the tournament brought in its share of big uluas, none of them were



caught on barbless circle hooks. The top 5 uluas ranged from 79.5 lb to 55.1 lb. Eleven barbless participants weighed in a total of 14 fishes, with more that were reported to have been released or taken home for some great meals. Most of the barbless fish were small game and not the typical "tournament" type fish, which showed the family and fun times influence for which this tournament is famous. Pualu, aweoweo, nenuue, red weke, moi, oio, toau, and mu were some



of the species caught. Many of the participants had obtained the hooks at the K-Mart tournament in July and put them to good use in this one.

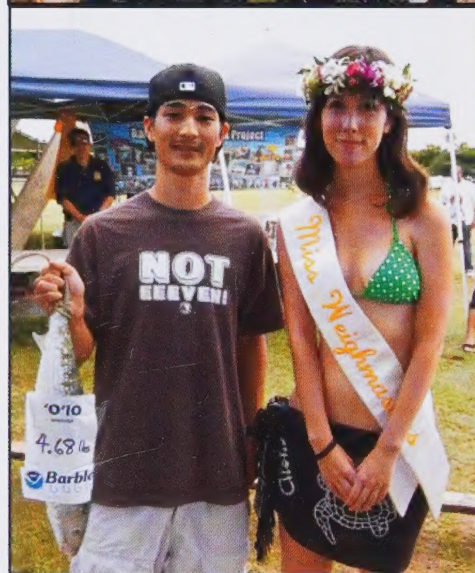
Many thanks to Jean for supporting the NOAA Barbless Circle Hook project and being proactive in leading the fishing community into the future. We will miss her if this is indeed her last tournament. But we can all hope otherwise.



Weighmaster Obaque Shoot-out, October 24-26, 2008

This new tournament was sponsored by the Atlapac Fishing Club and featured a Barbless Circle Hook Challenge. The weigh-in was held at Keehi Lagoon park from 11:00am to 1:00pm. Of the more than 100 entrants, 37 signed up for barbless. A very rainy weekend may have kept the actual fishing times to a minimum. Nonetheless more than a few fishes were weighed in. It rained all morning at the weigh-in site making the first hour a dismal affair with only a few fish dribbling in. The rain finally let up and stopped which brought out the remainder of the lucky guys that caught fish. At the end of the day the crowd of spectators who were really into trying to win the numerous raffle prizes just didn't want to go home. The Barbless team gave out quite a few informational packets and talked to many spectators before all was said and done.

The largest ulua for the tournament weighed in at 53.9 pounds. Four barbless fishes weighed in, 2 oio and 2 papios. The largest papio weighed in at **9.63 lb** and the largest oio weighed

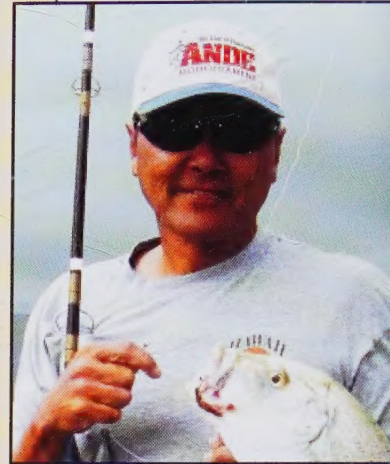


4.68 lb. In talking to many of the participants that signed up to try barbless, most of them said that although they tried they just didn't get any bites. "That's fishing" was an often heard comment.

Manager's Corner

I would like to thank the many anglers that took a chance, got out of your comfort zone, and tried using some barbless circle hooks this year. I hope that you have had the chance to convince yourself that they do work. Many of you dove right in and used the ulua sized hooks that were in the free give-away packs. I imagine that most folks started slowly with the smaller sizes. That's a good starting place to build your confidence.

Making barbless circle hooks a part of your arsenal when fishing in areas you know seals and turtles hang out will greatly reduce the risk of serious injury when the hook can more easily be self shed. The many barbless catches during the tournaments show that holding power of the hook is more than adequate to land the catch. – Kurt



Program Manager's Message

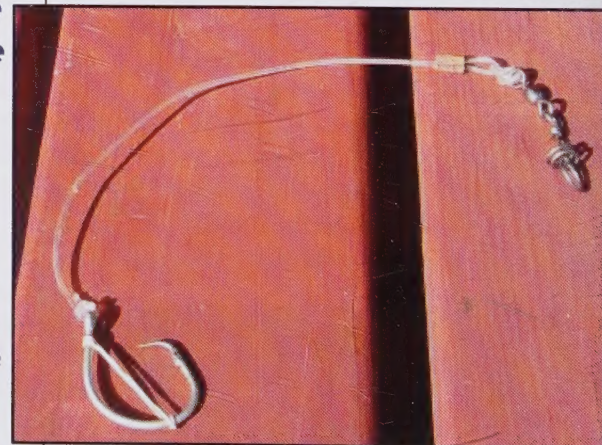
It works!

The ease of shedding a barbless circle hook has recently been substantiated. For those of you who repeatedly asked for "proof" that the barbless circle hooks could easily be self-shed, here's a 2007 incident from the Big Island which proves just that.

"Well, we got super lucky last night and got the hook out without even touching the seal. I've attached two pics so you can see the hook in the mouth and the hook by itself. It appears that the fisherman may have cut off the barb so the seal actually pulled the hook out herself when she reacted to me getting close, she moved away and popped it right out!!"

If only all releases were so easy. This first example shows what the barbless circle hook can do. Many thanks to the fisherman who used this one.

Please keep on using them. – Kurt





My Most *Unusual* Catch For 2008

Fishing with friends at their "secret spot" this past April provided a strange and unusual catch. I was using half of a frozen gold spot herring for bait and tossing it into the very rough, washing-machine surf just off the rocky shoreline. No ties, no friction locks, just hook um in the head and toss um out.

Hanapaa! By the time I got to the pole, the line was slack and it looked like I was going to pay the price for not paying attention. I reeled up the slack line and felt that something was still on. Then it happened, something that we all dread, the fish got pinned down. Hoping against hope, I slacked the line and prayed that the fish would free itself. After a minute it did and promptly got pinned down again! I slacked again and crossed my fingers.

Minutes later, it was free again but only for a moment before getting pinned down yet again. Slacked line again and I thought "three times, no way," but it came loose again. By now it was nearly next to the rocks and I lifted it to safety. Looking into the omilu's mouth, we noticed that it had two hooks, one old barbed hook and my new barbless that caught the fish. I guess the third time was the charm, rough water, slack line and all. Barbless and lucky. — Kurt



Sunday, October 12, 2008 - 9am to 4pm
at Pier 38, Home of the New Honolulu Fishing Village



Hawaii Fishing & Seafood Festival

At the third annual Fishing and Seafood Festival, the 2008 Largest Barbless Ulua award was given to Mitchell Taketa for his 66.9 lb barbless ulua that placed 10th in the S. Tokunaga Ulua Challenge. This was the first barbless ulua to place in a major tournament in Hawaii.

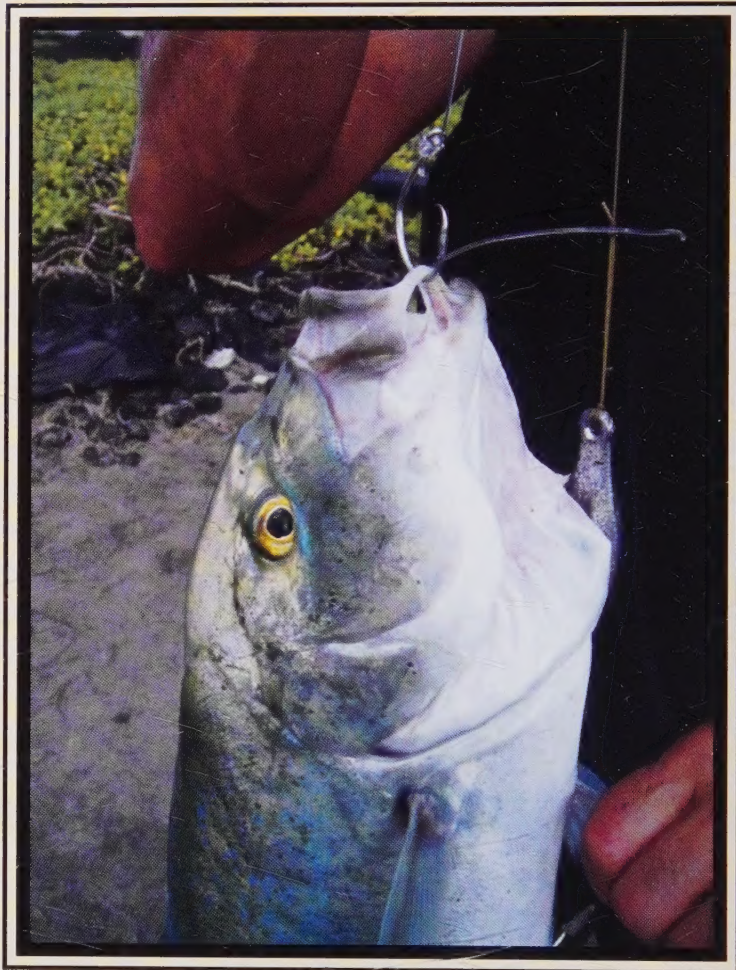


A Fisherman's Story

*Barbless Circle Hook story from the
2007 Tokunaga Ulua Challenge tournament*

One of the entrants emailed this story:

"Check out the pics of his 4.8 lber on barbless. Check out how big the hook hole was and he still brought it up. Also notice the line sticking out of the fish's mouth. Ken had jacked up his line and lost his hook in the process. He re-tied, re-baited, and re-cast. As soon as the bait hit the water, this fish bit. Evidently, the fish had found and ate his lost hook and bait, then bit his next bait as soon as it hit the bottom. When I pulled on the line, the hook came right out of the stomach so we know that it wasn't hooked in there. What a persistent fish!"



If you would like to have your barbless catches listed, please call, email, or write me and I'll be glad to add it to the growing list of anglers and catches.

Send us photos of your barbless hook catches so we can add them our growing photo list. Sending in your photos will give us implicit permission to use them for publicizing the NOAA Barbless Circle Hook Program.

For more info contact: Kurt Kawamoto-(808) 983-5326 or Kurt.Kawamoto@noaa.gov.
2570 Dole Street, Hon., HI 96822-2396.

Barbless Circle Hook Catches By You!



Send us photos of your barbless hook catches so we can add them to our growing collection. Please remember that sending us your photos means that you have implicitly given your permission for us to use them.



Barbless Circle Hook Catches By You!

